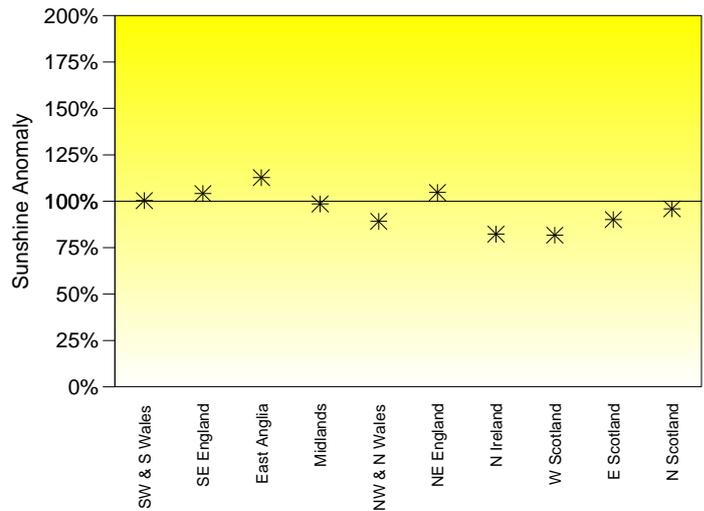
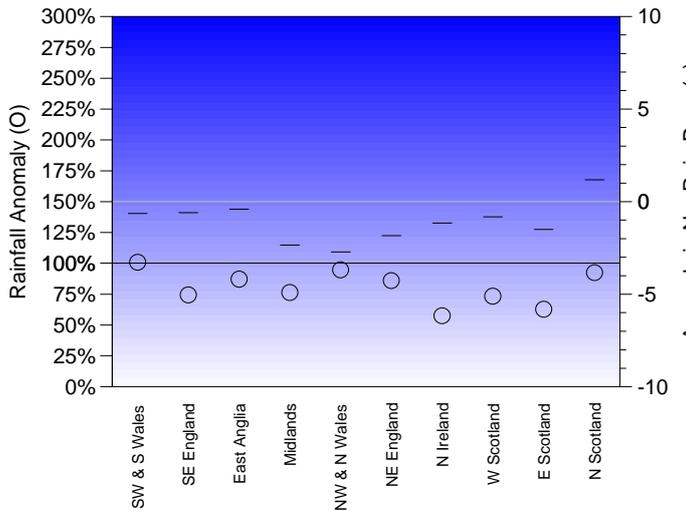


Extremes for August 2013	
Hottest:	34.1°C Heathrow, Greater London, 1st
Coldest:	1.6°C Loch Glascarnoch, Highland, 28th
Most Rain:	79.5mm Leigh-on-Sea 2, Essex, 25th
Most Sun:	14.8hrs Calthorpe, Norfolk, 1st
Windiest:	61mph Sule Skerry MAWS, Orkney, 31st
Warmest:	19.4°C St James Park, Greater London
Coollest:	12.7°C Fair Isle, Shetland
Wettest:	208.9mm Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd
Driest:	14.6mm Wiggonholt, West Sussex
Sunniest:	288.6hrs Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	72.4hrs Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway



Summer begins to wane by late August, but since our seas are slow to gain their heat, it is often a better time for a dip than June or July, providing that the weather does not disappoint. In fact, August has a reputation for being a rather dull, humid and thundery month and the last few Augusts have brought very mixed fortunes. A particular landmark is St. Bartholomew's Day on the 24th, exactly 40 days after St. Swithin's. It is the subject of many weather saws such as 'St. Bartlemy's mantle wipes dry all the tears Swithin can cry.' This reflects a tradition that the day marks a change to a period of drier and more settled weather, with the first chilly dawns and mists of autumn.

After the heavy rain and thunder of late July, August was a much quieter month. The 1st saw a surge of heat with 34.1°C (93°F) at Heathrow, the highest temperature recorded in the UK since July 2006. High dewpoints added to the sticky, uncomfortable feel in the south and east and after a very warm night, somewhat cooler conditions arrived on the 2nd behind a cold front. For the west and north, it was a very different story with outbreaks of rain and lower temperatures. The weekend of the 3rd-4th was rather breezy and showery, and an area of low pressure moving north-east across England and Wales gave some heavy showers or longer spells of rain on the 5th. It then became largely fine and warm until the 8th. Weak fronts subsequently affected parts of the UK from the 8th to the 16th, but amounts of rain were small and for many, the dry and pleasantly warm weather continued. The 17th-18th saw the first taste of autumn as a deep depression moved into the Norwegian Basin and strong winds and rainfall followed by showers, buffeted northern Britain. Rainfall amounts were much less in the south, but it was still sufficiently windy to cause a gust of 68mph at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight). Settled weather then returned (albeit with large cloud amounts), and it became very warm and humid by the 23rd in south-easterly winds. A depression near the Thames on the 24th put a dampener on the start of the Bank Holiday with downpours in some eastern areas. Flash flooding was reported in south Essex and rainwater (and sewage!) inundated hundreds of properties. At Shoeburyness, Essex 47.6mm of rain fell at in just four hours. There were a few residual showers the following day but the 26th was generally sunny and warm away from the far north. Month end saw a continuation of mainly dry conditions, but a deep depression near Iceland drove fronts south-east on the 30th, and much cooler and fresher north-west winds followed in its wake.

Overall it was another warm month for all of the UK - although not outstandingly so. It was also dry everywhere away from Essex, south-west England and Wales - where rainfall amounts were close to the average. For the UK as a whole, it was the driest August since 2003. Sunshine was generally close to average, but it was a little duller than normal in the north-west of the UK.

For much of central and western Europe, a blast of hot air on the 1st-2nd saw temperatures soar well into the 30s; 38°C (100°F) was reached in Madrid on the 1st while on the 2nd, Florence, Italy, climbed to 37°C (99°F) and Frankfurt in Germany reached 35°C (95°F). In eastern Europe, 38°C (100°F) was reached at Sandanski, Bulgaria, on the 4th. By the 6th however, conditions had deteriorated as violent thunderstorms brewed. In southern Germany a massive supercell hail storm developed in the Black Forest and pummelled Udingen, a municipality in the district of Reutlingen causing severe damage to buildings and cars. The largest recorded hailstones had a monstrous diameter of 14 cm - bigger the grapefruit! - and weighed over 360g.

Northern America also witnessed exceptional heat during early August. In Fairbanks, Alaska, the high soared to 28.5°C (83°F) on the 3rd, the 33rd day above 27°C (80°F) so far during the summer and a new record. However the following day, violent electrical storms sparked dozens of wildfires across the northern state. Torrential rains affected the USA's Midwestern states on the 8th, and the resulting flash flooding caused at least two fatalities, damaged homes and forced multiple water rescues. Up to 250mm of rain pounded southern Missouri overnight and some rain gauges around Waynesville (Missouri) recorded 370 mm of rain in a 48 hour period!

In China, the temperature climbed to 40.6°C (105°F) at Xujiahui Observatory, Shanghai on the 6th and then 40.8°C (105°F) the following day - setting a new all-time high temperature record there. Tropical Rainstorm Mangkhut brought torrential rainfall to Vietnam and Laos on the 8th after clipping Hainan Island, China. In the southern hemisphere, 28th -30th saw unusually cold weather - and deep snow affected Pacific South America. Peru experienced its heaviest falls in a decade and the "big freeze" killed at least seven people and thousands of livestock. The devastating cold wave also hit Bolivia and Paraguay. Schools were closed in 43 provinces and mining work - which forms a staple of their economies - had to be suspended because of the snow. One of the driest places on earth, the Chilean Atacama desert, experienced its heaviest snowfall for 30 years.